



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## 25 New York Senators Call On General Electric to Commit to Full Cleanup of Hudson River after Decades-Long Dumping of Toxic PCBs

BRAD HOYLMAN July 17, 2015

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*Senator Hoylman and 24 Colleagues from Both Parties Send Letters to CEO Jeffrey Immelt and Gov. Cuomo Urging G.E. to Go Beyond Its Court-Mandated Dredging Requirement*

**Hoylman: “Anything less than a full cleanup would be a dereliction of G.E.’s corporate and civic responsibility to the people of New York.”**

NEW YORK – Senator Brad Hoylman (D-Manhattan), ranking member of the New York State Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, and 24 of his colleagues in the State Senate are calling on corporate giant General Electric (G.E.) to commit to a full remediation of the Hudson River after its decades-long dumping of toxic PCB chemicals.

In a letter to the company’s CEO, Jeffrey Immelt, the lawmakers urged G.E. to go beyond its court-mandated obligations to help clean up the Hudson River by expanding dredging to include the Champlain Canal and other parts of the river in need of restoration. The Senators argue that a failure to do so would result in economic, environmental and health-related hardships on the people of New York.

“As members of the New York State Senate, we urge you to commit to continuing the Hudson River PCB dredging operation beyond the current dredging season and conduct a

full cleanup of Hudson River PCBs,” the letter to Immelt states. “The presence and long term impact of PCB contaminants that will be left behind when General Electric completes the EPA-mandated cleanup is well documented by the Federal Trustees charged with overseeing the river. Failure to continue the cleanup effort will result in severe economic, environmental, and public health impacts.”

The Senators sent a similar letter to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo urging his administration to publicly support a full cleanup by G.E. of Hudson River PCBs. The State Department of Environmental Conservation is one of three “natural resource trustees” of the Hudson River.

**Senator Brad Hoylman** said: “G.E. has only cleaned up 65 percent of the Hudson River. As the party responsible for polluting this treasured state natural resource, it’s G.E.’s responsibility to finish the job. Anything less than a full cleanup would be a dereliction of G.E.’s corporate and civic responsibility to the people of New York.”

**Scenic Hudson President Ned Sullivan** said: “Now is the time for G.E. to commit to a comprehensive restoration of the Hudson – for the health of the river and the region's economy and to protect New York's taxpayers from footing the bill to clean up the company’s toxic mess.”

**Dan Raichel, staff attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)**, said: “If GE doesn’t take this opportunity to finish the job and do it right, future generations of New Yorkers will be forced to continue bearing the costs and burdens of its toxic legacy in the Hudson. GE has the moral and legal obligation to clean up the Hudson the right way. The Senators’ letter today shows our elected representatives are demanding that GE meets that obligation.”

**Riverkeeper President Paul Gallay** said: “Riverkeeper stands with the people, businesses, and civic leaders along the Hudson in demanding that GE address the millions of pounds of

toxic PCBs it dumped into our river by continuing dredging until the job is complete. GE wants to end its clean-up without addressing the remaining PCB hot spots it's responsible for as part of its Natural Resource Damages liability. If it stops now, the river will be far from restored.”

**Clearwater Executive Director Peter Gross** said: “Clearwater, as a flagship organization dedicated to the protection and health of the Hudson, applauds the legislators who are speaking out in the letter. We endorse and join in the forthright and well-informed demand that GE – a company that tries to position itself as caring about the environment and public health - must finish cleaning up the toxic mess it made in the Hudson River.”

The letters were signed by Senators Hoylman, Joseph Addabbo, Tony Avella, Neil Breslin, Adriano Espaillat, David Carlucci, Leroy Comrie, Ruben Diaz, Jesse Hamilton, Ruth Hassell-Thompson, Tim Kennedy, Liz Krueger, Bill Larkin, George Latimer, Velmanette Montgomery, Marc Panepinto, Kevin Parker, Jose Peralta, Bill Perkins, Gustavo Rivera, James Sanders, Diane Savino, Jose Serrano, Daniel Squadron, Toby Stavisky.

Senator Hoylman [held a town hall meeting](#) on the Hudson River cleanup on June 4, 2015.

Participants heard from Daniel Raichel, Staff Attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council; Hayley Carlock, Environmental Attorney for Scenic Hudson; and Paul Gallay, President and Hudson Riverkeeper for Riverkeeper and were urged to take action by signing the petition on [Campaign for a Cleaner Hudson's website](#).

Copies of each letter can be found below.

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June 26, 2015

Mr. Jeffrey Immelt, CEO  
General Electric Company  
315 Easton Turnpike  
Fairfield, CT 06828

Dear Mr. Immelt:

As members of the New York State Senate, we urge you to commit to continuing the Hudson River PCB dredging operation beyond the current dredging season and conduct a full cleanup of Hudson River PCBs. The presence and long term impact of PCB contaminants that will be left behind when General Electric completes the EPA-mandated cleanup is well documented by the Federal Trustees charged with overseeing the river. Failure to continue the cleanup effort will result in severe economic, environmental, and public health impacts.

The Hudson River – from the foothills of the Adirondacks to Manhattan’s Battery – is where diverse populations, geographies, natural resources, and economic opportunities converge. The Hudson possesses abundant scenic and natural resources that provide a commercial and environmental foundation for our communities to thrive. Together, with you, we are investors in this critical resource, which has been referred to as “the landscape that defined America,” and to this day serves as the backbone of a \$4.75 billion tourism industry. As elected members of the state legislature, we have designed and supported strategies to revitalize the river and its communities through legislation and budgetary allocations.

No company is better equipped to complete the massive undertaking of removing the toxic PCBs released into the river from your manufacturing facilities in Hudson Falls and Fort Edward. While we are grateful that GE has fully met the requirements of Phase 2 dredging, we are deeply concerned by reports from federal, state and independent natural resource scientists indicating that significant PCB “hot spots” will remain after the company’s

dredging operations shut down later this year.

The health risks posed by this contamination are frightening and well-documented, with one recent study by the New York/New Jersey Contamination Assessment and Reduction Project calling it an “economic ball and chain.” If left behind, these Superfund-caliber sediments falling just outside mandated dredging areas will undermine efforts to reduce threats to public health and reestablish damaged habitats.

New York State’s future is tied to the restoration of the Hudson River and the return of the once-vibrant commercial fishing industry and lucrative cargo shipping on the Champlain Canal that existed prior to 1976. Committing to a more comprehensive cleanup now will lead to significant environmental and economic recovery of the Hudson River and better the lives of the 15 million Americans who live in proximity to the river within the next generation.

A growing roster of community groups and municipalities has united behind this vision and has called for the removal of residual PCB contamination immediately. We support these efforts and pledge our support to work with you to achieve this important goal. Nothing less will preserve General Electric’s reputation and legacy.

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June 26, 2015

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
New York State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As members of the New York State Senate, we urge your administration to publicly support a full cleanup by General Electric of Hudson River PCBs. The presence and long term impact of PCB contaminants that will be left behind when General Electric completes their EPA-mandated cleanup is well documented by the Federal Trustees charged with overseeing the river. Failure to continue the cleanup effort will result in severe economic, environmental, and public health impacts.

The Hudson River – from the foothills of the Adirondacks to Manhattan’s Battery – is where diverse populations, geographies, natural resources, and economic opportunities converge. The Hudson possesses abundant scenic and natural resources that provide a commercial and environmental foundation for our communities to thrive. Together, with you, we are investors in this critical resource, which has been referred to as “the landscape that defined America,” and to this day serves as the backbone of a \$4.75billion tourism industry. As elected members of the state legislature, we have designed and supported strategies to revitalize the river and its communities through legislation and budgetary allocations.

No company is better equipped to complete the massive undertaking of removing the toxic PCBs released into the river from General Electric’s manufacturing facilities in Hudson Falls and Fort Edward than GE itself. While we are grateful the company has fully met the requirements of Phase 2 dredging, we are deeply concerned by reports from federal, state and independent natural resource scientists indicating that significant PCB “hot spots” will remain after the company’s dredging operations shut down later this year.

The health risks posed by this contamination are frightening and well-documented, with one recent study by the New York/New Jersey Contamination Assessment and Reduction Project calling it an “economic ball and chain.” If left behind, these Superfund-caliber sediments falling just outside mandated dredging areas will undermine efforts to reduce threats to public health and reestablish damaged habitats.

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A growing roster of community groups and municipalities has united behind this vision and has called for the removal of residual PCB contamination immediately. We support these efforts and pledge our support to work with you to bring pressure upon General Electric to achieve this important goal. Nothing less will ensure the viability and productivity of the Hudson River for future generations.

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